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THE ROMULUS ROMAN

Vol. 118, No. 2

News you can use, news you can trust

Chiefs gymnastics team places third out of 16 teams
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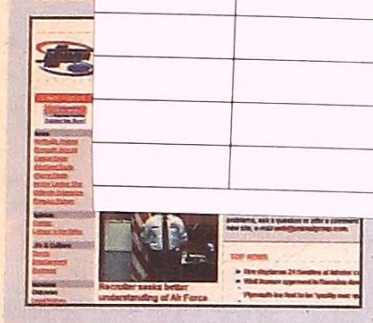

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Romulus can bank on positive aspects of city

New council president faces challenges

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Lifestyle issues determine grant spending

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Quality of life issues are the driving force behind the announced uses for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars for 2006 in Romulus.

The public was invited to a study session Tuesday to determine the uses for about $286,000 in requested grant funding made available by the CDBG program. The city will know whether it has received the full $286,000 in the coming weeks.

"We basically use this money for things that probably shouldn't come out of the general fund, but are necessary for us," said Mayor Alan Lambert. "Things like recreation and senior programming; the stuff that we should provide as a city, generally come out of this funding. It's the right way to use this money."

This year, projects will include the continuation of city wide senior services, which include recreation programs, assistance with transportation and minor home repairs, educational activities and help with chores. That will cost about $30,000.

The city is also asking for $240,000 to pay for part of the scheduled bond payment for the senior center, which was rebuilt during the past 18 months and will officially open for business next week. The city sold $3.4 million in bonds to finance the project.

Fifty-thousand dollars for a housing rehabilitation program is also part of the application, according to the plan submitted by Maria Lambert, the director of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), which oversees the funds for the city.

The CDBG program is a 30-year-old federal program that was created to address the problems of aging or fiscally-challenged communities. To participate in the Wayne County program, municipalities need to demonstrate that 51 percent of residents are in the low to moderate-income bracket.

The funds are typically used for projects like fixing dilapidated streets, improving public recreation opportunities for residents, installing parks, providing low-cost services for special needs individuals. Charitable organizations that are providing a vital public service can also be given a grant by a municipality.

In the past, the city has used the funds primarily for recreation and senior services, said the mayor.

"It's been a helpful program for us," he said.

But there could be massive cuts in the program at the federal level in the future. Another program could be put into place by the federal government, but it's still unclear as to whether the parameters of that program would cover the same needs as

See **Grant,** page 3

Viva Barth

Third-grade students at Barth Elementary School celebrated Mexican culture at a special "fiesta" last week. The class project was designed to teach students – who were reading a book about a Mexican boy – about the contributions the country has made to culture. Students performed traditional dances and prepared for parents at the fiesta. Pictured here are (left to right): Kayla Bumyak, Lacey Cody, India Fizer, Beverly Lewis, and Shelby Calhoun.

Mayor, officials get pay hikes

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Elected officials in Romulus may soon earn more money.

Mayor Alan Lambert will receive a one-time $12,000 increase, while City Clerk Linda Choate and City Treasurer Pamela Morrison-Kersey will both net an additional $9,348 per year from Jan. 1, 2006 to Dec. 31, 2009. Currently, Lambert earns $78,957, and Choate and Kersey earn $61,651.20.

Part-time city council members, who earn a $7,900 stipend, will earn $1,500 more for the three year period. The mayor pro-tem, who chairs all of the council meetings, currently earns an $8,700 stipend, but would also pick up the $1,500.

A five-member Officers Compensation Committee determined the three officials should be given the raises after a review of salaries showed their pay rates were not commensurate with other area municipalities, said Jack Trumble, the chairperson of the commission, in a memorandum to the city dated Dec. 16.

"Based upon average salaries, as published by the Michigan Municipal League (MML), the commission found the salaries for the elected officials in the city to be low and that the disparity from 2001 had not been fully correct-

See **Raises,** page 3

Walk commemorates King's legacy

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday celebration in Romulus will include tributes to Civil Rights icon Rosa Parks and a search for a bone marrow donor for a popular high school teacher.

The "Living Out the Dream . . . Within and Without" will begin at 8 a.m. this Monday at Romulus Middle School with a breakfast provided by the Romulus Education Association. School athletic department staff members will act as servers.

Then a symbolic walk from the middle school to the high school will take place beginning at 8:30 a.m. where a program will take place honoring the lives of Dr. King and Mrs. Parks, who died late last year.

Speakers for the event include Mayor Alan Lambert, Superintendent of Schools Joel Carr, the Rev. Arthur Willis of the Pentecostal Baptist Church and several performances by school and community groups.

A choir of community volunteers who met early in the week to rehearse will also perform at the high school.

Councilwoman Ellen Craig-Bragg, who is also an assistant in

See **King,** page 3

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New president named at Wayne County Community College

Andrea King
Staff Writer

Dr. Derrick Manns has been named interim president of the western campus of Wayne County Community College District in Belleville.

Manns, who is no stranger to the college, said as the new interim president of the western campus his role would be overseeing the day-to-day operation of the campus.

"It's a great environment to be working for," said Manns. "WCCCD is doing a lot of good things and we're only at the beginning of more good things to come."

Manns started his educational career at Madonna University in Livonia where he was the department chair for the sports management program, the assistant vice-president for the academic administration, the coordinator of collaborative programming for grades K-12 community linkages and the assistant director of multi-cultural programs. He then moved on to Bristol Community College in Massachusetts where he was the assistant dean of academic affairs and the interim director for distance learning.

In July, Manns started at WCCCD as the associate vice-chancellor for instruction, curriculum and career programs until he accepted his new position as interim president of the western campus.

Manns also brings a wealth of education to the position. He is a graduate of Bowling Green University in Ohio, where he earned a bachelors and masters degree in recreation sport administration and a graduate of the University of Toledo, where he received his doctoral degree in higher education and administration.

Dr. Derrick Manns

"This goal is an opportunity for me," said Manns. "There's no better way to learn than doing this. I'm really looking forward to working with the students of the community."

Manns, who has been published numerous times in the past, is currently working on an article for a national publication about capital budgeting practices, facilities and maintenance issues. His other published work includes topics such as building campus community, higher education transfer and student governance and basic needs.

Martha Grier, executive assistant to Chancellor Dr. Curtis Ivery, said that Manns is no stranger to the area or the educational system because of his positions held out of the state and his national view of the community college education.

"He understands the college from the classroom to the boardroom," she said.

As interim president, Manns said he hopes to bring the opportunity to establish relationships and partnerships not only between grades K-12, but also area businesses and members of the local community.

"Getting out there, assessing the needs and getting a feel for what's going on will be the next steps," he said.

Manns is also looking forward to building a stronger community base at the western campus.

"I'd like to solidify the student base and increase community partnerships," he said. "I'd also like to see enhanced job opportunities for the students and respond to the regional employment and educational training needs in both credit and non-credit offerings."

Recently, the western campus has experienced tremendous growth. This is one area that Manns said he will continue to build upon.

Manns replaces Dr. Randall Miller who left the college to pursue an opportunity out-of-state.

Employee admits guilt in robbery of Inkster CVS drugstore

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Upon closer examination, Daniel Joseph Douglas' story didn't add up.

Douglas, 43, told police on the afternoon of Nov. 7, 2005, that he was working behind the counter of the CVS drugstore on Cherry Hill Road when a man approached him and forced him at gunpoint to take about $10,000 from the store safe.

But police investigators said that the incident never happened, and Douglas – who was charged with embezzlement and filing a false police report Friday – admitted to Inkster police investigators that he took the money.

"He reported to us that he was robbed and ordered to open the safe," said Det. Brian Dennis, the lead investigator on the case. "but he changed his story several times after that. We were able to get search warrants for his home on Montego Court in Livonia, where we found $8,622 of the money."

Douglas also allegedly told officers the robber asked him to remove the videotape from the store surveillance system, but the investigation determined Douglas removed the tape himself, Dennis said.

Visibly shaken during his arraignment, Douglas asked 22nd District Court Judge Sylvia A. James if TV cameras and reporters could be barred from the courtroom. James allowed the media to remain in the courtroom because, in most cases, criminal charges are made public.

Douglas also said he was remorseful. Police said he fully cooperated with police once he admitted the robbery story was a fabrication.

"This has been completely humiliating," he said. "That's why I've cooperated. I just want to put this behind me."

Both embezzlement and filing a false police report are felony charges. Embezzlement is punishable by up to five years in prison and a $10,000 fine, or both. Additional fines could be levied for up to three times the amount of money stolen. Filing a false police report is a four-year felony.

Douglas is free on $50,000 personal bond. He had no criminal record prior to this incident.

Douglas worked for the drugstore chain for about three years as an assistant manager.

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Council approves 'cluster' development

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Franklin Properties cleared another hurdle Monday night at the city council meeting when the seven members voted to allow a "cluster" style residential development to proceed.

But Wellesley Park, a collection of 49 condominiums, may have to proceed under a different name.

Andrew Milia, the owner of Franklin Properties, was asked to consider a name change because another development has a similar name. Milia, who has worked with the city for more than a year on this project, said he would look at changing the name of the project.

But council approval of the special land use request that will allow a cluster development on a 33-acre parcel of vacant land near wetlands on Merriman and Wayne roads will allow the developer to move forward.

"We're not done yet, but we're pleased that the council is excited about our plan," he said. "We still have a couple more approvals to get through, then we can break ground sometime in the late summer, at the latest."

Milia will need to return to the planning commission for a final site approval for the project, and will most likely not have to return to the city council before construction begins.

The issue is whether the city would allow homes – particularly in close-knit configuration – so close to wetlands. But officials needed to balance that aspect with the need for newer homes and increasing the number of available dwellings in Romulus, said Councilman Randolph Gear.

"I think that we're interested in anything that will get more rooftops in the city," he said.

The developer initially asked the city to grant the special land use request at the Dec. 12 council meeting, but officials were reluctant to approve the project because they had no other information and wanted to learn more about it. But Milia said that timing for the project – and decent weather to begin construction – was running out, and that the project would be imperiled if the city couldn't come to a decision soon.

The condos that will eventually be constructed on the site will be about 1,500 square feet in size, and will be priced from $250,000 to $300,000, Milia said. To preserve the wetland and to maintain a rural feel for the project, 56 percent of the available land will be green space, according to the current plan.

Romulus Senior Center grand opening set for Jan. 20

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

After a relentless pursuit of funding and construction, the new and improved Romulus Senior Center will officially open at 11 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 20.

The $3 million center – which is housed in a new, 15,000-square foot facility on the 36000 block of Bibbens – will be a hub for many of the city athletic and social programs designed with senior citizens in mind, said Linda Norman, the director of Romulus Senior Services.

"The senior center is one of the best kept secrets in Romulus," she said. "The old facility was added onto, and this one was designed from the ground up – it's going to have a games room, a exercise room, a lounge, and other amenities we just didn't have the space for. Implementing new programs is going to take a while, though, and we've been in touch with other senior centers to see how some of their activities work. We're really looking forward to it."

Plans for a new center began about 18 months ago, and the initial plan was to have recreation and senior officials combined on the same site where the former senior center once stood. However, Mayor Alan Lambert unveiled a plan to create a new recreation center by renovating and adding onto a building on Wayne Road a year ago.

Financing was provided by Community Development Block Grant from Wayne County and tax dollars captured by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The city sold bonds to get the project started – block grants will pay back two thirds of the cost of the building, and DDA funds will supply the remaining third.

Maria Lambert, the director of the DDA, said no new taxes were levied to pay for the center, and that it's money well spent.

"A senior center was one of the first things that came to mind when we started looking at how we should spend money," she said. "There's 15,000 square feet in there; all of the senior activities will take place there."

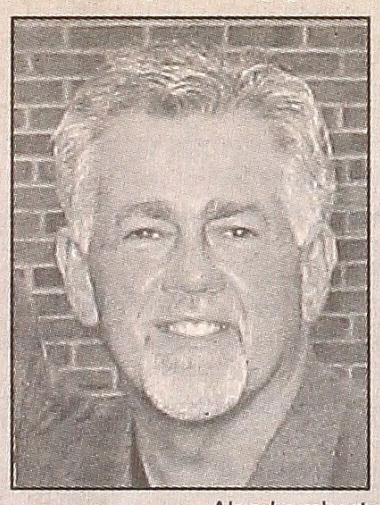
She also said many seniors make use of the city programs.

"It's a social thing for them," she said. "The can take pottery classes, and take part in quite a few activities. Some of our seniors spend all day there with Linda (Norman), so it's a good thing to have."

The senior center was designed by the architectural firm HarleyEllis.

Raises - Council unlikely to oppose

FROM PAGE 1



Alan Lambert

ed," he said in the letter. "Therefore, the commission finds the following determination to be reasonable."

The commission made the determination based on an MML report entitled, "MML Wage and Salary Data Report – 2003." That information was based on questionnaires sent to member municipalities in 2002.

Compensation committees are state-mandated to avoid the appearance of impropriety by taking elected officials out of the process of determining their pay rates. Members meet every four years to make recommendations for elected officials only. Members are appointed by the mayor and then approved by the council.

Under the ordinance that established the compensation commission, the raise will become a reality within 30 days of filing the report at the clerk's office, unless a member of city council requests a vote. All of the recommendations must be rejected collectively, and two-thirds of the council must vote the proposal down.

Councilman LeRoy Burcroff said the raises are overdue and well deserved.

"When the committee met four years ago, I remember asking them not to raise the pay for council members because I felt it wouldn't be right," he said. "But it's been a long time, and I can say personally that I will not be voting to reject this."

One question that does linger is why the commission based its raises on a report from 2003 when the MML generated a report on its web site with more current figures. Trumble was unreachable for comment for this story Tuesday.

Lambert said he was removed from his process and isn't sure how the figures were determined.

"I just can't answer that at this time," he said. "Maybe it was a mistake. But I can't imaging they used old figures if more current data is available."

Lambert last received a pay increase four years ago, shortly after he was elected mayor.

King - Parks, teacher highlighted

FROM PAGE 1

the high school guidance office, is on the planning committee for the event and says it is highly-anticipated by residents.

"Some things are going to be a little different this year because of Rosa Parks and Ed Horn, our director of technology," she said. "Ed is only 29-years old, and he's been stricken with a rare a cancer, and he needs a bone marrow transplant."

Horn, a married of father of two who has worked at the district for many years, is on leave from his position while he fights cancer. Craig-Bragg said one of the things that would greatly aid in his treatment is to find a bone marrow donor – but that can be difficult because there are few African American donors.

Craig-Bragg said there would be no better way to honor Dr. King's memory than to take part in the effort to find a match for Horn.

"They have better luck with donors if they are from the same (ethnic) background," she said. "We really encourage everyone to come out and take the test – it only involves a pin prick on your finger."

The bone marrow testing will take pace at the high school from 8-10 a.m., and again from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information about the event, call Craig-Bragg at (734) 532-1020.

Grant - Spending cuts likely in city

FROM PAGE 1

CDBG, or what the per-community funding levels would be.

Paying for the senior center using the dollars could put a crimp in the DDA budgets, however.

The federal funds are committed to pay back the $3.4 million bond issue until 2013. The plan – which is currently in the third year – was put into place when deep federal cuts were barely on the radar.

According to city records, the plan assumes a 5 percent reduction in grant funding per year, but the cuts could be deeper at the federal level. The DDA is paying the portion of the bond payment that is not covered by the CDBG allocation.

Lambert said he doubts the city – or prospective DDA projects – would be negatively affected by the changes because the DDA fund is healthy.

"It's not like we don't have funds we can tap into to pay for these things," he said. "We have a DDA that can pay for these things if that turns out to be the case. I don't think we'll have to cut anything."

Maria Lambert could not be reached for comment about the possibility of CDBG cuts on Tuesday.

News briefs

State of the City address scheduled

Romulus Mayor Alan R. Lambert will deliver the "State of the City Address" at the Greater Romulus Chamber of Commerce Business Luncheon Jan. 17.

The lunch will be at the Detroit Metro Airport Marriott Hotel, 30559 Flynn Dr., Romulus.

The cost is $13 for members and $15 for non-members. Registration starts at 11:30 a.m., and lunch is at noon.

Reservations can be made by calling the chamber office at (734) 326-4290 or by email at info@romuluschamber.org.

PEN seeks students for after-school program

The PEN Enrichment Center is accepting students for the Back 2 Basics after-school program.

The program was designed by PEN educators to provide students a safe, secure place to enjoy activities and get help with schoolwork. The Back 2 Basics lessons stress the importance of good behavior, help improve students' reading and math skills, and exposes them to computers.

Classes are at the PEN center from 4-6:30 p.m. The cost of the program is $25 per week.

The PEN center is located at 35625 Vinewood Ave., in Romulus. For more information, call (734) 728-1273.

Library announces new science workshops

The Romulus Public Library has joined forces with the Ann Arbor Exhibit Museum of Natural History and the University of Michigan to bring the "Life Throughout the Ages" workshops to area students.

The workshops are designed to help students learn more about the life sciences, and help promote an interest in science. Fossils, the concept of geological time, and paleontology will be explored in depth.

The next workshop is scheduled from 10 to 11 a.m. Feb. 4.

The Romulus Public Library is located off Wayne Road, next to city hall. For more information about the workshops or other library programs, call the library at (734) 942-7589.

Opinion

Now it's your turn

Change or die. Evolution or extinction.

No matter how you phrase it, those two short sentence fragments sum up a reality in the marketplace of the 21st Century. If you don't change with the times, the times will eat you up.

So we made some changes of our own.

We've changed the look – and hopefully the functionality – of our web site at www.journalgroup.com.

Beginning last week and continuing into the future, we've revamped the site to better meet the needs of our readers as well as the reality of the market.

Now, we could talk about market studies and use other newspaper sites as benchmarks to explain why we wanted to make it more user friendly by adding graphics and making it easier to navigate. The reality, though, is that we just got tired of the way the old one looked and we wanted to have a stronger web presence.

The new site will attempt to answer questions and complaints we've received since we last updated our site – which was only a few short months ago, by the way. We will be able to archive stories. We will be able to facilitate internet advertising. And more.

Obviously, we're pretty pleased with the way it looks and works. Our web master, we feel, should be justifiably congratulated for his efforts. One of the best aspects of his role – and our relatively small size, compared to some other newspaper chains and groups – is our openness to suggestions, too, and our ability to make fluid changes to the content and ease of the site without running the decision by a board of directors or a study group or recommending panel or anything like that.

Nope, if any suggestions come in that make sense and help improve the site, we can get them into motion quickly, sometimes even that day.

That's where you come in. Check out the new site, 'walk' around it, kick the tires and take it for a spin.

Then let us know what you think. We'd love to hear from you.

Time to accentuate the positive

The long fight to stop a hazardous waste injection well in the City of Romulus came to an end recently.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issued a permit to Environmental Disposal Systems (EDS) to operate the well, which is near Interstate 94 and Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Local, state and federal officials, not to mention residents and environmental activists had sought to stop the project for more than 15 years.

In the end, MDEQ officials said they could not legally stop the company from operating the facility. That is small solace to the members of the community who continued this long expensive fight. Neither is the simple, sad truth that you just can't win them all.

So what happens now?

Well, there's little anybody can do about it other than hope the operation of the plant does not pose any short or long-term health hazards or negatively impact the property values for all Romulus residents. Officials from the firm have touted that as fact all along, but everyone on the other side of the issue has been understandably skeptical.

The fact remains, though, that Romulus will continue to be a place sought by developers with more positive projects in mind. The impending arrival of proposed casinos and a racetrack will help soften up the image of the community and help cover up this bruise.

One fight officials can continue, though, is the fight against the importation of toxic waste from Canada.

See **Positive,** page 5

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The Journal Newspapers are published Thursdays at 35540 Michigan Ave., Wayne, Michigan, 48184.
Central office hours are 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
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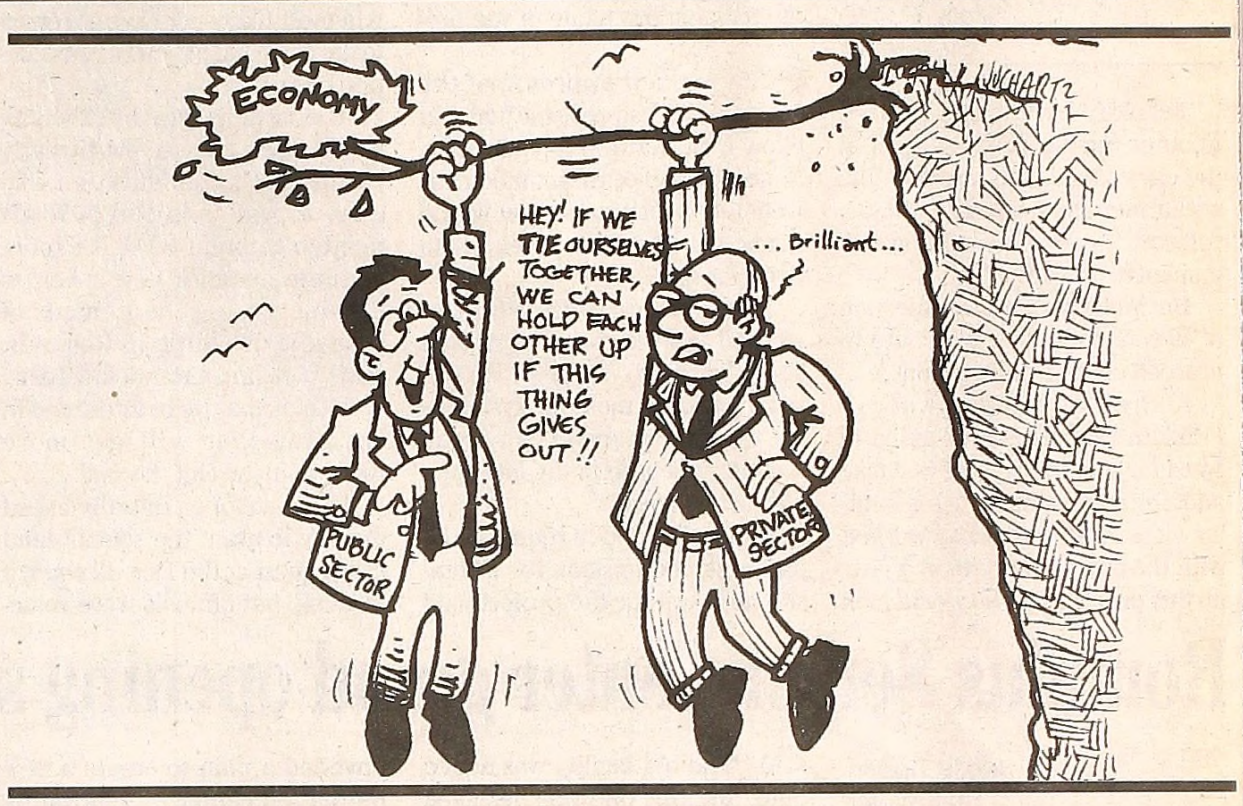
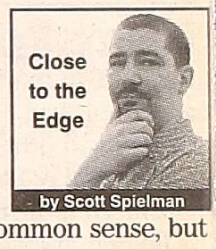


Here we go again? I doubt it



Bill Wild probably thought his first meeting at president of the Westland City Council would go a little better.

He had barely been put into that role when he had to declare a recess because nobody on the council could agree on who would fill the second spot: that of council president pro-tem.

Former Council President and Mayor Chuck Pickering quickly became a consensus candidate; he'll fill in for Wild during absences and such.

Those that think that this might herald a return to days of close council votes, contention between the players and a clearly divided council will probably be disappointed, though. I'm sure things will be fine.

These kind of council votes are always quirky, sometimes embarrassing and they rarely go off without a hitch. Everyone usually has something in mind – a reason why or why not – that they may not want to voice in front of the cameras. I mean, they still have to get along for the foreseeable future, right?

I wouldn't look at that as a sign of things to come.

In fact, I was excited when I heard Wild had secured the votes to get the council president position. I think he's going to do a good job in the role. I was always struck, when I attended the meetings, by his ability to know when to talk and when not to talk. He even knew when to poke a little fun and inject humor into a frequently humorless job. That might sound like common sense, but it's not as easy as it sounds. It's certainly rare in a political figure, even if said political figure doesn't consider himself or herself a politician.

Besides, having Pickering as a backup will probably work out best in the long run. It's always good to have an experienced veteran at your right side, and Pickering has seen just about everything the city has to offer.

It'll be interesting to watch, though, how the council gets along going forward. The tricky part of choosing a new president and president pro- tem may be behind them, but the council will face plenty of challenges during the coming year. Let's face it, in the light of recent economic predictions, the job isn't going to get any easier. The cohesiveness of the council may be tested, too, by the fact that two members – Jim Godbout and Richard LeBlanc – are seeking the same seat in Lansing, the one that will be vacated at the end of State Rep. Glenn Anderson's (D-Westland) current term. He's term-limited out of office.

If you put all those things together, it's easy to see the council will face some challenges in the coming year. But I think Wild will be up to the task.

2005 was one very 'interesting' year

Possibly the greatest achievement in Westland in 2005 was the triumph of human kindness.

In a year plagued by lost jobs, high unemployment rates, skyrocketing insurance, retirement, and utility costs and serious spikes in the cost of gasoline, Westland families still took part in an outpouring of help for strangers affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. From Westland Fire Chief Michael Reddy, who worked as a relief worker in the impacted areas, and residents who donated clothing and money to charitable collections, to schoolchildren who found innovative ways to donate and business owners who hosted fundraisers of their own, assistance—large or small—came from every section of the community.

Part of what differentiates a plain 'city' from a 'community' is this sense of unity and the feeling of mutual goals and plans between neighbors. While a large-scale disaster like Katrina brought the people of Westland closer to each other, the diversity of the city makes it very easy to fall back on an us vs. them mentality. If only we could find an ongoing local cause to get behind—from homeless services to school support—that would pry people out of their Internet and television based cocoon, everyone would benefit. Barring another seriously traumatic event, it probably won't happen...but it can't hurt to try.

Meanwhile, the poor economy, combined with assistance from the state and federal government that just couldn't meet the need, wreaked havoc on budgets throughout the state. Yet while other communities faltered and inched closer to bankruptcy, both the City of Westland and the Wayne-Westland Community School District managed to not only survive, but also to make the best of a bad situation.

Unfortunately, the economic situation isn't likely to be resolved anytime soon. For the next year, both the city and the school district will likely need to make some small changes—most of them behind the scenes—to help them save what funding they do have. Officials claim most of the changes won't impact the public in any way—but it never hurts to be prepared and to pay attention.

Elsewhere in the community, development prospered as businesses—particularly restaurants— sprang up virtually overnight. The area surrounding Westland Shopping Center was built up quickly while aging, empty stores at the intersection of Ford and Wayne roads were torn down to make way for new developments. Cooper School, a facility formerly operated by the Livonia Public Schools within the Westland border, was finally torn down.

In 2006, the question of development should take a back seat to redevelopment as officials focus

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2005

FROM PAGE 4

more of their attention on long-vacant properties, like the giant concrete box, formerly known as Sam's Club, on Cowan Road or the former Daly's location on Wayne Road near Palmer Road. With any luck, the city will be able to fill the properties it already has before too many more are built. Plus, progress is expected at both the Cooper School and Ford Road sites—which would bring the properties that much closer to becoming assets to the community. Now if only no more drugstores could be added to the community...

Not all news is good news, however. Animals made the headlines twice this year. For residents of a neighborhood off Ford Road near Newburgh Road, this year marked the advent of a serious rat problem. Blamed on unkempt private properties that supported the lifestyle rats know and love and a problematic grease trap at a nearby bar, irate residents descended on city hall for answers, ticketing of ordinance violators, and rat poison.

Meanwhile, kittens became big news after a stray cat—a resident of the cemetery at Ford Road and Wildwood Street—was diagnosed with rabies. The community gained notoriety as 10 stray cats that had lived in the area were euthanized and nearly 20 humans who had come in contact with the animals received precautionary treatments for rabies.

While city officials plan on continuing their crusades to prevent these problems from occurring in the future, their success will hinge on the willingness of the community to cooperate. While another rabies scare in the near future is unlikely, for each abandoned animal or unfixed pet allowed to roam the neighborhood, the number of uncared-for animals—and potential rabies hosts—could increase. The rats will also remain a problem until the neighborhood is no longer an attractive habitat—a fight that would require help from all of the residents in the area to win.

Positive

FROM PAGE 4

The battle over whether to accept regular household trash from our neighboring country to the north is still ongoing, and may end up on the ballot for voters to decide.

Hopefully, there is still time to stop this insult from being added to the injury. These types of toxic disposal sites may be a sad fact of reality – they ultimately have to go somewhere, we suppose – but that doesn't mean we have to accept it from elsewhere, too.

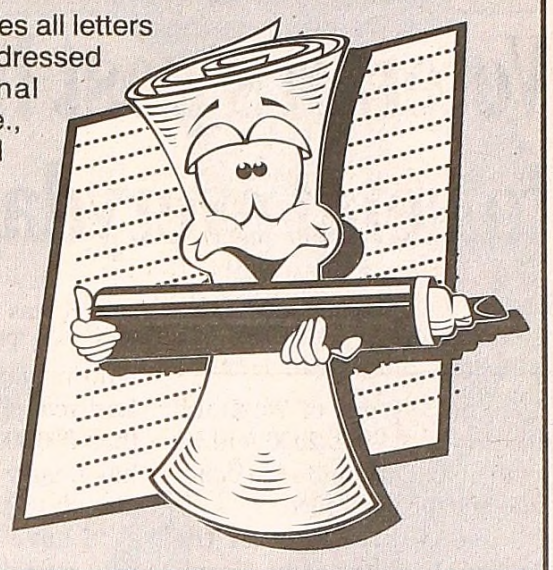
Officials could do worse than set their sights on that impending battle to make an unbearable situation at least slightly more tolerable.

In the meantime, though, they shouldn't lose sight of the fact that Romulus will survive this defeat and prosper because of the many other projects they were able to bring into the community.

Send us your letters

The Journal Newspapers welcomes all letters to the editor. Letters should be addressed to: The Editor, The Journal Newspapers, 35540 Michigan Ave., Wayne, Michigan 48184. All letters will be considered for publication and may be edited for content, space and length.

Letters must be signed and a phone number included only for verification of the writer's identity. Addresses and phone numbers will be kept confidential.



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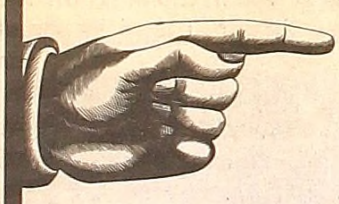

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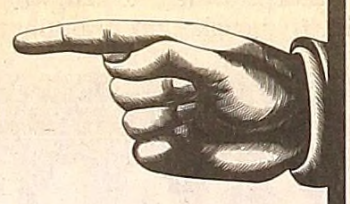


NOTICE
ROMULUS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COUNTY OF WAYNE
Annual School Election May 2, 2006

LAST DAY TO FILE NOMINATING PETITIONS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006 4:00 P.M.

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE ROMULUS COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Nominating petitions for filling two (2) vacancies as a Member of the Board of Education in the Romulus Community School District may be obtained from the office of the Romulus City Clerk, 11111 Wayne Road, Romulus, Michigan 48174-1485, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

TWO (2) - FOUR (4) YEAR TERM

Deadline for submission of nominating petitions is Tuesday, February 7, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. Prevailing Eastern Time. Petitions must contain a minimum of forty (40) signatures of voters registered in the Romulus Community School District or submit a one hundred dollar ($100.00) filing fee in lieu of Petitions.

Linda R. Choate, CMC, Clerk
City of Romulus, Michigan

Publish: January 12, 2006

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Charter Township of Van Buren Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, January 17, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.,** in the Board of Trustees Room, 46425 Tyler Road, Charter Township of Van Buren, County of Wayne, Michigan 48111 in the matter of application number VBT-05-043 BZA.

The application requests action by the BZA concerning an aggregate of parcels of land approximately 376.69 acres in area, all located within Section 4 of Van Buren Township, generally bounded on the south by and abutting the Ecorse Road public right of way, bounded on the east by and abutting the Belleville Road public right of way, bounded on the north by and abutting the Van Born Road public right of way, and bounded on the west by and abutting the Beck Road public road right of way, also known as the former General Motors Property. This application does not include the parcel known as 6820 Belleville Road, V-125-83-016-0007-000. The complete list of the parcel numbers in the application can be viewed at the Van Buren Township Department of Development.

The applicant is requesting the following:
A ZONING ORDINANCE VARIANCE FROM THE LAND USES REGULATED BY ORDINANCE 02-06-92, AS AMENDED; SECTION 15.02 PERMITTED USES IN THE M-1 ZONING DISTRICT; SECTION 15.03 PERMITTED USES AFTER SPECIAL APPROVAL IN THE M-1 ZONING DISTRICT; SECTION 16.02 PERMITTED USES IN THE M-2 ZONING DISTRICT; SECTION 16.03 PERMITTED USES AFTER SPECIAL APPROVAL.

The subject site is located within the Charter Township of Van Buren and is zoned M-2 (General Industrial). The applicant, Ecorse-Belleville L.L.C., is requesting a relief from an action by the Township to deny a request to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance 06-02-92, as amended, to by change the M-2 zoning of the approximately 376.69 acres to approximately 248.91 acres of R-1C (single family high density residential), approximately 88.15 acres of RM-1 (multiple family residential), and approximately 39.63 acres to C-1 (General Commercial).

The applicant seeks relief pursuant to Sections 20.829 and 20.833 of the Zoning Ordinance; however a preliminary issue is whether the BZA has jurisdiction to consider the application pursuant to Sections 20.830 and 20.831 of the Zoning Ordinance

Written comments will be accepted at the Department of Developmental Services until 5:00 p.m. on the date of the above reference Public Hearing.

In the spirit of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals with a disability should feel free to contact the Department of Developmental Services at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting, if requesting accommodations.

Posted: January 12, 2006
Publish: January 12, 2006

Helping hand

Veteran's post honors efforts to send everyday items to soldiers

Scott Spielman
Editor

Helen Stevens of Westland said she envisions 2006 will be another year of trips to the dollar store and the post office.

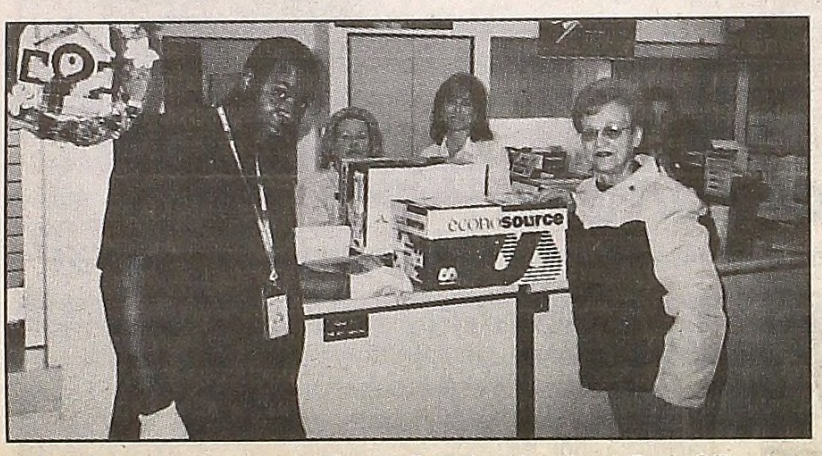
Stevens, president of the Westland Auxiliary of the Harris-Kehrer Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3323, said the group would continue to send everyday items to soldiers overseas.

"We've been getting a lot of good stuff to them," she said.

When she started the program to send items to soldiers in Iraq and other areas overseas, she said it was only designed to last one year. The need has gone on, however, and so has the program. Last year she said she sent more than 300,900 items to troops and has nearly hit the 10,000 mark already this year.

"I have 10 big boxes sitting now, ready to go out," she said.

It's one of many reasons she received the Commander's Appreciation Award from her post, as well as a medallion of recognition from several National Guard units stationed in North Carolina for the items they received when they served overseas.



Helen Stevens (right) said the staff at the Westland Post Office has been instrumental in getting donated packages to troops overseas.

She's refined the process now, corresponding with unit commanders to determine exactly how many men are in their patrol and what their needs are. Then it's a trip to the dollar store to pick up the items, package them and send them out. It's not a solitary effort she said; donations have flooded into V.F.W. posts and at civic buildings, too.

"Everyone has been very generous," she said.

The Ladies Auxiliary has been active in other areas, too. She said they distributed goods to 15 needy families in Westland last year – all provided through donations. They provide academic scholarships and sponsor The Patriot's Pen, an essay contest for sixth to eighth graders. Silva Corone won that this year and will compete in a national competition.

The Voice of Democracy contest is open to high school students; Julia Good won first place in that, Jessica Kay took second and Adam Garring earned third place. All three are students at Wayne Memorial and will learn this week if they placed in the district competition.

State superintendent of schools to speak

Mehan Chatham
Staff Writer

The caliber of the education provided by area schools is always a touchy subject.

From funding crises to the changes in graduation requirements currently under consideration at the state level, decisions at the state level have, for better or worse, impacted school districts throughout the state.

Tonight, parents and school officials will have the opportunity to find answers to their questions from someone who ought to know—Mike Flanagan, superintendent of schools for the State of Michigan.

Sponsored by the office of State Sen. Bruce Patterson (R-Canton), the town hall meeting is designed to give residents reasons behind recent state-level school decisions, about proposed future changes, and to allow them to ask questions about educational policies or the impact the changes will have on local school districts.

"Education is an important topic for parents," said Christopher Kelley, communications director for Patterson. "They want to make sure their schools are able to do what they want them to do."

Questions on all topics will be welcome, but at least part of the meeting will deal with changes to state-level high school graduation requirements proposed by Patterson. Currently, the only requirement for graduation mandated by the state is a single civics class; otherwise, districts are essentially free to design their own graduation requirements. The changes proposed by Patterson would result in the adoption of a math- and science-heavy graduation standards used statewide.

State school funding is also expected to be a primary topic at the meeting.

The meeting will take place at 7 tonight in Room 550 of the VisTaTech Center at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. The campus is located at 18600 Haggerty Road, between Six and Seven mile roads, with the VisTaTech Center situated off of the north parking lot.

Due to the limited number of seats available, pre-registration is required. To reserve a seat, contact Christopher Gillett at (517) 373-7350.

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THE SCENE

HOSTEL

A gory bloodbath not worthy of Tarantino's name

Reviewed By
Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

It's generally a crapshoot when seeing a horror flick and most of the time it's a losing game.

But when Quentin Tarantino steps up to the table and blows on the dice, putting his stamp of approval (as in 'Quentin Tarantino presents') on something in bold letters, it's expected to be a winner.

Unfortunately for audiences, the newly released *Hostel* boldly displays the director/producer's name but falls drastically short of all expectations related to it.

Smart, funny and witty are just a few adjectives used to describe the famed director/producer who spawned such cult classics like *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Kill Bill volumes 1* and *2*. *Hostel* is not on a par with any of those films, though. Thankfully, Tarantino only took an executive producer seat for this project, keeping face with the public as far as directing goes. However, this gruesome disgrace of a film could be the first blood speckled smear of Tarantino's career.

Eli Roth scripted and directed this slasher piece. For some reason he garnered the attention of seven studios with his independent horror film *Cabin Fever*—an equally silly and ridiculous movie—in 2003. And now he's back with *Hostel* – and a budget.

The story starts out with two American backpackers Paxton (Jay Hernandez) and Josh (Derek Richardson) and their Icelandic friend, Oli (Eythor Gudjonsson), in Amsterdam seeking the thrills and excitement only the liberal city can legally provide. Before the trio finish up their tour of Europe in Barcelona, they get side tracked with a trip to Bratislava. One Hollander promises them that there is a Slovakian hostel there that is the nirvana of all hostels for American travelers.

It was soon apparent as to why. On arrival the three travelers end up sharing a room with two beautiful and exotic female travelers, Natalya (Barbara Nedeljakova) and Svetlana (Jana Kaderabkova), who like to be naked during the day as much as they like to party at night.

Everything appears to fall into place until Paxton and Josh find themselves handcuffed to chairs in a grimy room with various tools and sharp objects laid out around them and some blood-spattered foreigners waiting in the shadows to use them. For a film that offered a preview of an animated kids' movie, *Curious George*, and started out as what could have been labeled *National Lampoon's European Vacation 2*, it turned grotesque and grisly in a hurry.

Roth didn't hold back on the gore, that's for sure. There's a lot of blood and guts and it left me wondering if the sticky residue on the armrest was left over from the seat's previous tenant's Frozen Coke or something else. Was that a Ju Ju Bee I just stepped on?

Without giving too much away, Roth uses the murder-for-money premise through the second half of the film, taking place in a run down factory at the edge of town. The atmosphere is much like the movie *Saw*—dark, foreboding and ugly. But *Saw* was smart and well made.

With just a handful of no-name actors and only a couple of filming locations I wondered where Roth's budget would be put to use. I was hoping for some great and horrific special effects, but that didn't happen. Looking back I guess the budget must have gone to the L.A. Center for Breast Augmentation if there is such a place. The entire first half of the movie is nothing but female nudity, which some may find offensive. In fact, just 15 minutes into the show several female patrons of the theater walked out and never returned. I don't blame them.

Now that I have increased the ticket sales amongst teenage boys, I feel I should tell those who want to see a real movie that this isn't it. *Hostel* isn't scary, just gross—on many levels. Roll the dice elsewhere.

Canton Village Theater offers weekend magic and music

The sounds of Mother Africa, thrilling illusions and a new educational series from the DIA are part of the diverse schedule this weekend at the Village Theater.

First, the Gratitude Steel Band comes to the stage tonight. The group blends warm harmonies of steel pans, voices and electric guitar with drums and percussion to bring together Mother Africa, Jamaica and The United States. Their lyrics center around themes of unity, love, self respect and celebration. The group's performances are reminiscent of Reggae legends like Bob Marley, The Whalers, Peter Tosh, and Maxi Priest. The show begins at 8 p.m. and tickets are $10.

Tomorrow night, magician Aaron Radatz's show is anhour of entertainment that combines magic, illusion, music, dance—and of course, audience participation. Radatz appears in a tube filled with smoke and lightning, contact a ghost that has some unsettled business, and vanishes and reappears all over the theater in seconds.The magic begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are $30.

On Saturday, Orchestra Canton presents the third concert of the 2005-2006 season under Director Nan Harrison Washburn with a presentation of "Back to Bach." Included in the program are Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*, Suite of Bach Favorites (*Sheep May Safely Graze*, *Air on a G-String* and *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*), arranged by Washburn and Bach's Coffee Cantata No. 211. The cantata soloists, performing in costume and in English, take a comical look at the evils and pleasures of drinking coffee. "Back to Bach" will feature Orchestra Canton performers Mark Schuppener on violin and Dennis Carter on flute, as well as guest artists Tami Morse on harpsichord and vocalists Nadine Balbeisi (soprano), Emery Stephens (baritone), and David Wilson (tenor). The concert begins at 8 p.m. and tickets are $18. A buffet-style dinner at 7 p.m. is also offered for a ticket price of $40 total.

Finally, children and adults are invited to the Café DIA Series presentation of Children of the World on Sunday morning. Jane Strand, who will be the lecturer for this segment, will provide a glimpse into the lives of children through paintings, sculpture, and clothing from around the world. Guests can also enjoy an assortment of cheeses, fruits, breads, and pastries from Holiday Market of Canton. The lecture begins at 11:45 and tickets are $15.

The Scene

Friday Night Fever

Theater fundraiser includes leisure suits, disco and big hair

Scott Spielman
Editor

Disco isn't dead.

That's the concept behind the next fundraiser put on by the Stage Door fundraising group, an interactive dinner theater event that takes place during the annual Wayne Winterfest.

Entitled St Humphrey's Disco Ball, the dinner theater will transport participants back to a time of disco balls, leisure suits, big hair and cheesy music as students at a Catholic high school celebrate the final dance before the school is closed forever.

"It's another original and it should be a blast," said Colleen Meyer, arts and entertainment supervisor for the City of Wayne. Her husband, Chris, and long-time theater participant Bill Spurlin are writing the interactive comedy.

The show takes place on Jan. 27 at the banquet hall in the Wayne Community Center. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show will start about 30 minutes later. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The show costs $35 per person, which includes the performance, a dinner buffet and an open bar.

Meyer said the room would be decorated to bring out nostalgia for the disco era, the costumes will be fun and hopefully not limited to the actors, themselves.

"We encourage everyone to dress for the occasion," she said.

Stage Door is the fundraising arm of the adult community theater programs in the City of Wayne. All proceeds of the event will benefit the theater programs, which have grown in both complexity and popularity during the past two years. Their most recent show, a rendition of Disney's Beauty and the Beast, was well-received and sold out at the last show.

"We are definitely getting bigger crowds to our events than ever before, so that's a great thing," Meyer said.

Advance tickets are suggested for St. Humphrey's Disco Ball, she said. They can be purchased at the Wayne Community Center or ordered by calling (734) 721-7400.

'The Ringer' is poor excuse for unfunny, formulaic film making

Jason Carmel Davis
Staff Writer

The rumor going around before the release of *The Ringer* was that director Barry Blaustein (*The Nutty Professor*) got the "OK" from officials with the Special Olympics to make the film.

That alone should make people feel a little more comfortable about laughing at the gags in the film about a guy (Johnny Knoxville) who lies about his mental abilities so that he can enter those Special Olympics to make a few bucks.

Steve Barker (Knoxville, of MTV Jackass fame) is somewhat of an underachiever. He showed promise in high school where he was a track star and displayed some acting talent. After asking his boss for a raise, he's ordered to fire the janitor, a man named Stavi. But Barker feels bad about his boss's request and ends up offering the man a job cutting grass in his apartment complex. When Stavi loses his fingers in a freak accident—use your imagination as to how—Barker is left literally holding the ice and body part filled bag.

He's a reasonably good guy, though, and he wants to pay for his landscaping buddy's operation. So, in order to raise to money, Barker must do something crazy. With the help of his gambling-addicted uncle, Gary, Barker fakes mental retardation and enters himself into the Special Olympics. The idea might sound funny, but the execution is a new high in excruciatingly unfunny.

All the usual plot devices are clumsily introduced in *The Ringer*. Barker takes on the persona of a mentally limited man named 'Jeffy," and is aided by a pretty volunteer. She has a cheesy boyfriend who can't stay away from other women—a la Craig Kilborn's character in *Old School*. Jeffy/Barker is given a run for his money by a multiple gold metal winning Special Olympian who is considered a superstar. And the ultimate showdown involving a number of track and field events comprise much of the film's climax. Can Barker get the money to pay for the operation, get the girl, and somehow save his soul in the process?

The weirdest thing about the film is the casting.

Knoxville plays a guy acting like he's mentally challenged. Some of the actors in the film are playing mentally challenged characters, and some of the actors are mentally challenged in real life and take roles as Special Olympic participants. Since you recognize some of the actors playing mentally challenged characters, it is very difficult to believe them in their roles no matter how well they perform. This is made even worse because the movie is all about faking a mental handicap. Therefore, the story is hampered by a built-in lack of credibility. I kept thinking that maybe it would be more interesting had the roles all been switched and the mentally challenged actors attempt to play characters that do not have limited intellectual or emotional development. This might work, too, because the actors having mental and emotional development limitations do the best acting in the movie.

Maybe this film would have been a little better if it wasn't taken from a *South Park* episode. That could be because it's funnier when an 8-year-old does something like that because he doesn't know any better. The *South Park* episode has twice as many laughs in a third of the time.

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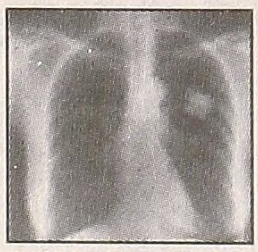

LUNG CANCER X-RAY

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SPORTS

Northville hoopsters hold off Hartland, remain undefeated

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

The Northville Mustangs remained undefeated on the hardwood after they topped the Hartland Eagles, 54-45, last Tuesday.

Northville was scheduled to have last week off, but the original game with Hartland was bumped from Dec. 9 to last Tuesday because of inclement weather.

It didn't matter, as Northville seemed prepared for the match.

They led at the end of every quarter to run away with the victory.

The Eagles started quick, taking a 8-5 lead, but with about 3:20 remaining in the first. Northville senior co-captain Chris Lorente drained a triple to knot the game, 8-8. It was from that point that the 'Stangs never looked back.

Northville Coach Darrel Schumacher said it was a combination of defense and a deep rotation that earned his team the victory.

"Our defense applied enough pressure to keep them (Hartland) out of their comfort zone," he said. "We had a lot of players contribute. (Nick) Kaldis, with his speed and hard work ethic, caused a lot of things to happen. Everyone did a great job.

"We feel that there should be no difference between number one player and number 13," he added. "When you bring the sixth player in you want them to come in and add a lift. It's been nice that we have that sixth man to do that."

Northville finished off the first period with a 13-12 lead and the Mustangs held on to a one-point advantage through the first two minutes of the second, 18-17, when Hartland called a time-out to make some adjustments. But the baskets kept falling for both teams. There were very few defensive rebounds for Northville as Hartland continued to make the most of their initial shots, according to Schumacher. The Mustangs managed a 28-26 advantage at the halfway mark.

Northville's deep rotation appeared to take its toll on Hartland's defense in the second half.

Lorente had three steals in the third that helped Northville extend its lead, 37-31, at the end of the session.

Northville's tenacious press caused more turnovers in the final frame, helping the Mustangs to victory. Campy Smith nailed two free throws at the 5:07 mark to put Northville up, 41-35, and the Mustangs pulled ahead for good.

Nine Mustangs scored in the effort. Lorente and junior Alvin Storrs led all scorers with 11 points each. Junior Andrew Manor had five; sophomore Mike Rogers, four; senior Doug Hasse, three; senior Brandon Barkoski, 2; and senior Steve Clark, 2.

Matt Wagner and Brian Hanner each scored nine for Hartland.

The win moved the mustangs to 5-0 for the season.

"We're fortunate to be where we are right now but things change," Schumacher said. "We started out good last year but just fell apart. We're real happy but the games seem to get tougher and tighter every time.

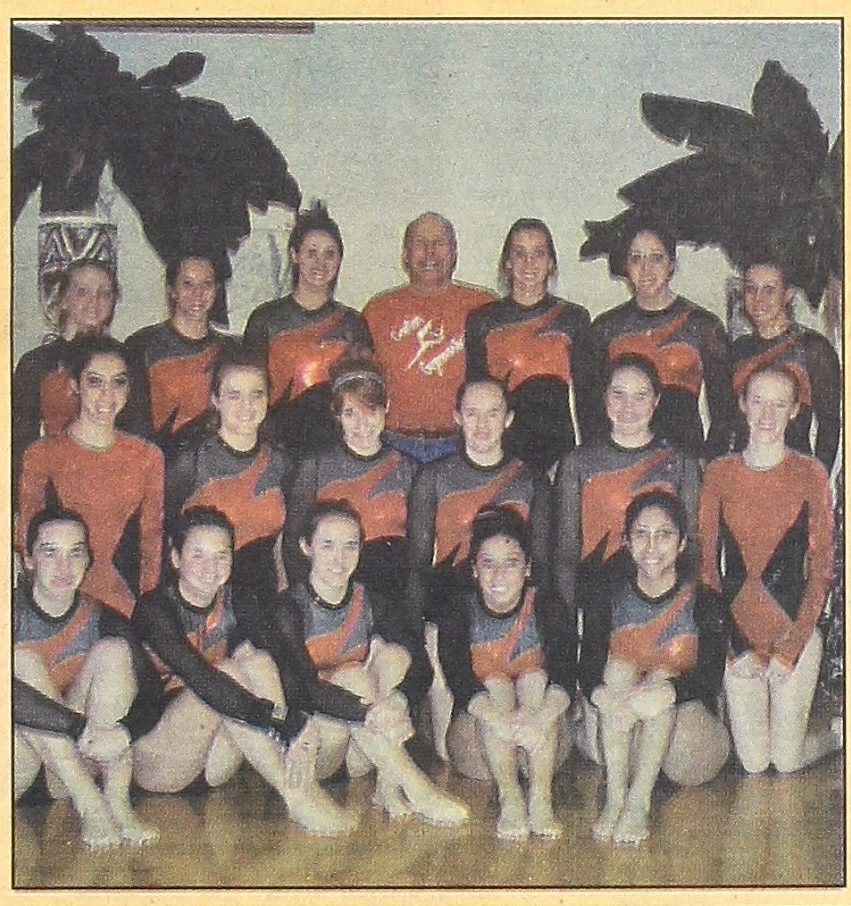
"I like what we've been doing and we're starting to identify roles," he added. "The kids are excited to be where we are right now—they're a tough group of kids and highly competitive."

This week will prove to be tougher for the Mustangs. They headed to rival Novi on Tuesday but the results were unavailable at press time. Northville is back in action with their fifth straight road game at 7 p.m. tomorrow at Livonia Churchill.

They finish up their road tour with a 7 p.m. meeting against Walled Lake Northern next Tuesday and finally get a home game on Friday, Jan. 20 against a struggling John Glenn squad.

Balancing act

The Canton Chiefs gymnastics team placed third out of 16 teams in the Rockford Gymnastics Invitational last Saturday with a team score of 138.775. In Division 1 competition, Canton's Alyssa Kelley placed third all-around (35.55) with a third on Vault (9.4), fifth on Bars (8.5) and first on floor (9.5). Kara Ahern placed fifth on beam (8.8) and third on floor (9.125), Kate Staley placed fifth all around (34.6) and Jessie Murray sixth (beam 8.75, bars 8.35). In Division 2 Mina Pirzadeh placed sixth on beam (8.45), Chelsea Selden fifth on beam (8.55), Kaitlyn Burns fifth on vault (8.55) and seventh on floor (8.65) and Olivia Stephens 12th on vault (8.1).



Belbin, Agosta have chance for Olympics

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

Those who don't know the names Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosta better remember them now.

They could be America's next Olympic ice dancing gold medalists and they live and train right here in southeastern Michigan—in Canton Township, to be exact.

The two-time U.S. champions, two-time Four Continents winners, three-time Smart Ones Skate America champs and 2005's World silver medalists live, eat and breathe at the Arctic Edge Ice Arena in Canton where they train with long-time coaches Igor Shpilband and Marina Zoueva.

The skating duo is currently competing at the U.S. National Championships this week in St. Louis—attempting a three-peat.

Soon, all of the hard work and accolades will hopefully pay off. If they win a top-three spot at nationals, which they are more than likely to do, they will head to Torino, Italy for the upcoming Olympic Winter Games—a long-time dream of theirs.

A year ago it seemed unlikely that the two would accomplish that goal. Agosta was born in the United States, but Belbin was born and raised in Canada, making her ineligible to compete on the U.S. Olympic team. However, the 21-year-old has lived, trained and competed in this country since 1998 while fighting for citizenship. And despite their chances to win, Belbin and Agosta had to sit out the Olympic Winter Games four years ago because she wasn't a citizen.

That changed last month when both houses of Congress approved a bill containing a provision regarding citizenship for aliens of extraordinary ability, which Belbin is. On President George W. Bush signed the bill, setting it and the dancing duo in motion.

On New Year's Eve, Belbin raised her right hand and was sworn in as a citizen of the United States of America.

Neither Belbin nor Agosta were available for comment before leaving for St. Louis, but Shpilband is proud that they will have a chance for an Olympic medal.

"It's pretty fantastic," he said about Belbin receiving citizenship in time for Nationals. "They already missed the Olympics in 2002. They qualified for Salt Lake City but weren't able to go because she wasn't citizen. But it is even more exciting to go now because they not only have chance to participate they have a realistic chance to win a medal

See **Skaters,** page 10

Major league soccer returns to Detroit area

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

Soccer has grown expeditiously along the I-275 corridor during the past five years—making Canton, Plymouth and Northville a new "mecca" of sorts for the sport.

So it only makes sense that major league soccer should revisit the Detroit area.

And it will.

The Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL) will land a new team right in the backyard of one of the sport's fastest growing areas.

Hantz Group Sports & Entertainment, L.L.C., a subsidiary of the Hantz Financial Group located in Southfield, has purchased the rights for the entire state of Michigan and will have a team ready for the start of the 2006-07 season, which kicks off in November.

Greg Bibb, the president of Hantz Group Sports and Entertainment, is working to finalize a deal that will make Compuware Sports Arena in Plymouth Township the team's home field.

"We are in the final stages of negotiations right now," Bibb said. "Compuware is the ideal size for us at this time and the goal is to sell out every game. The arena also provides for affordable entertainment and an enjoyable family atmosphere."

Bibb wouldn't give any hints as to what the name of the team will be but said it was an exhaustive process that started with more than 200 possibilities.

He is also interviewing candidates for the head coach position and said it has been narrowed down from 35 to three hopefuls.

"I feel that we could win with any of the three final candidates," Bibb said. "Right now it's not a matter of what their weaknesses are but what their strengths are."

The finalized lease agreement, name, logo, coach, training facility, major sponsors and tickets sales information will be released later this month.

The season will run November through April and will consist of 15 home and 15 road contests. The home games, according to Bibb, will be scheduled for weekends.

"Our goal is to throw the biggest party in the area 15 nights of the year," Bibb said. "By party, I mean there will be something for everyone."

Bibb will start assembling the team in late February or early March with an amateur draft. The Detroit team will have the first pick in each of the six rounds. In summer they will take part in the expansion draft where they will be able to choose any unprotected player from any other franchise in the league. Then they will head to training camp in October. The final roster will consist of 16-20 players.

Bibb also said that he is in the very preliminary talks with some local media outlets to have the games televised.

"The way I see it is: if you're not on TV, you're not relevant," Bibb said.

Henry Klimes, a pillar in the local soccer community and the head boys varsity soccer coach at Northville High School, looks upon the idea of another major league soccer team with some skepticism. He and others have watched both the Detroit Rockers and the Neon fail.

"I would love to see it work," he said. "The hardest thing is if

See **Soccer,** page 11

Tigers shoot down Rockets, 49-41

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

It wasn't pretty but Belleville got the job done on the hardwood, defeating John Glenn, 49-41, last Friday at home.

The pace was slow and easy shots were missed on both sides of the court.

Belleville's top scorer Leon Freeman only played the second and half of the fourth quarters, but still led the team with 16 points. Belleville's center Mike Gibson played only a few minutes in the entire contest.

"We'll just say we had some illnesses and different things going on, that's why we were shuffling a lot of people in there early," said Belleville Coach Mike Krogel. "When you have to do that you know you're going to lack some cohesiveness on the floor. We were starting some guys that don't normally start and subbing some guys that normally don't sub. Things were a little out of whack, but we had enough in the tank to get it done."

Belleville shot to a 10-6 lead at the end of the first. Jackie Wilson scored all six of Glenn's points in the period.

Wilson hit a double at the 6:08 mark of the second to put the Rockets up for the first time, 13-12. Glenn held on to the one-point lead until 3:13 when Freeman hit a basket, knotting things at 15. Wilson split a pair from the line to give his team the one-point advantage again. It didn't last – Carlos Clark hit a two and a free throw, putting Belleville up 18-16. That was good enough for the Tigers to carry a 22-19 lead into halftime.

Glenn recovered the lead, 26-24, with a seven-point run in the third. Belleville answered with a 7-0 run, finishing the quarter on top, 31-26.

Belleville didn't relinquish the lead the rest of the way but Glenn battled back from a 10-point deficit to within three with just 53 seconds left in the game. Freeman jumped in with two quick baskets—one a slam-dunk—to help carry Belleville to the 49-41 victory.

Clark, an emerging star on the Belleville squad, scored 13 in the contest.

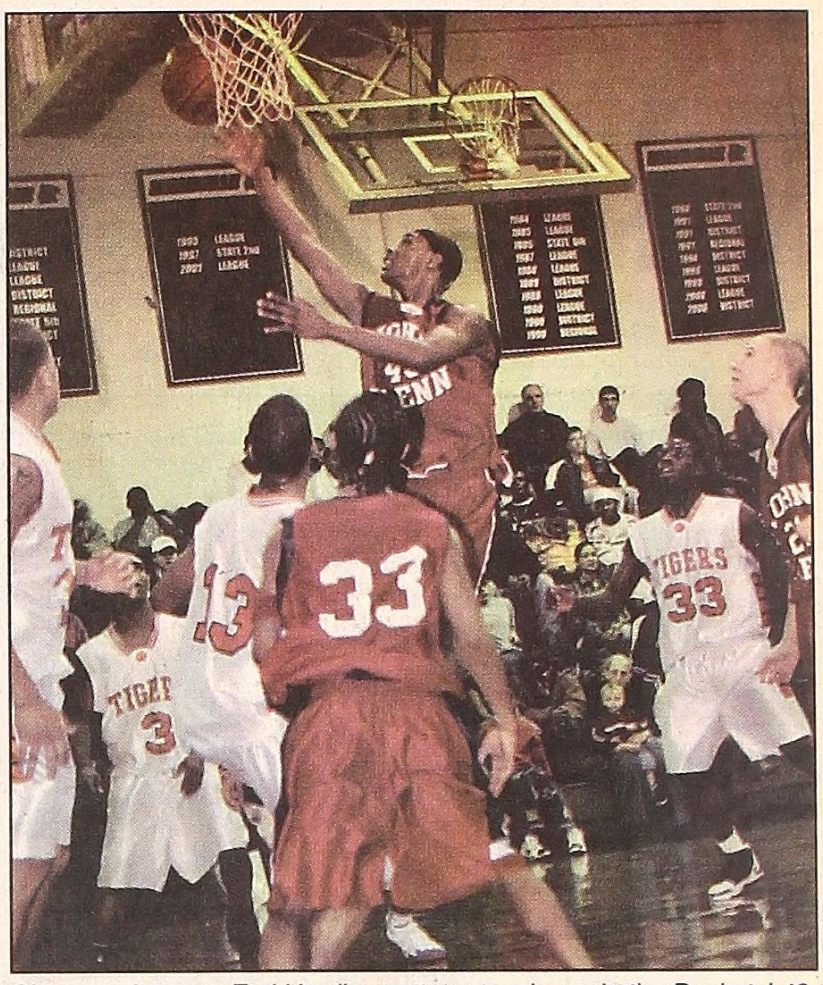
"Carlos Clark plays within himself—he has a lot of energy and athletic ability—he has good ups and is very quick," Krogel said. "We just have to utilize it properly and he needs to utilize it properly and when he does, a lot of good things happen. He had a good game."

Wilson led all scorers with 20 points.

Glenn Coach Joel Lloyd was unavailable for comment following the game.

Belleville will host a pretty good Monroe team at 7 p.m. tomorrow.

Glenn hosts cross-town rivals Wayne at 7 p.m. tomorrow.



Glenn sophomore Earl Hardison attempts a layup in the Rockets' 49-41 loss to the Tigers in Belleville last Friday night.

Skaters

FROM PAGE 9

for United States."

It may seem odd that Shpilband—who has trained three other couples to the Olympic level in his coaching career—is now here in Canton, but to him it's not.

"I wasn't choosing an area, I was choosing an ice rink," he said. "When I look at the ice rink I thought this was a great facility and the management has been great to us and supportive and understanding to our needs. They're just great people you can trust."

Belbin and Agosta aren't the only trainees of Shpilband and Zoueva at the Arctic Edge Arena competing at Nationals this week. Senior ice dancers Ryan Omeara and Jamie Silverstein are headed west along with junior dance partners Charlie White (Bloomfield Hills) and Meryl Davis (Bloomfield).

Under the guidance of coach Adrienne Lenda and Sergey Petrovski, junior pair Kendra Moyle (Chelsea) and Andy Seitz is headed to nationals, too. They have only been training together since February 2005 but have just as good of chance as a veteran couple to win.

"Every month they are getting stronger and their elements are getting stronger," Lenda said. "They have really done quite well and progressed quickly in the short amount of time they've been together."

Singles lady skater Alissa Czisny, who trains between Bloomfield and Canton under coach Theresa McKendry, is headed to St. Louis as well. Novice dancers Shannon Wingle and Ryan Devereaux, will also be at Nationals.

Although Nationals are in St. Louis and the Olympics are held in Italy, they both will seem a little closer to home with all the local competitors. Belbin and Agosta will be the ones to watch as they try to become the Cinderella story of Torino.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ROMULUS CITY COUNCIL HELD JANUARY 3, 2006 IN THE ROMULUS CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER 11111 S. WAYNE ROAD, ROMULUS, MICHIGAN 48174.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Pro-Tem Randolph Gear.
Present: John Barden, Ellen Craig-Bragg, Leroy Burcroff, Harry Crout, William Crova, Randolph Gear, William Wadsworth.
Administrative Officials in Attendance:
Alan Lambert, Mayor
Linda R. Choate, CMC, Clerk
Pamela Morrison-Kersey, CMFA, Treasurer

1. Motion by Crova, supported by Barden to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes -Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously

06-001

2. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Barden to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Romulus City Council held December 27, 2005.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes -Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Abstain - Crova.
Motion Carried.

3. None.

06-002

4A. Motion by Burcroff, supported by Wadsworth to adopt a resolution in special recognition of Mrs. Helen Hay upon her retirement from the Romulus Cable Communication Commission after 23 years of dedicated service.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

4. Motion by Crova, supported by Barden to accept the Chairperson's Report.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

06-003

5A. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Burcroff to concur with the administration and grant authorization for the Mayor and clerk to enter into Data Hosting and World Wide Web Display "Pay per Hit" Service Agreement with BS&A Software; allowing residents to access their tax and parcel data over the internet free of charge.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

06-004

6A1. Motion by Crova, supported by Barden to schedule a public hearing for Demolition List 05-02, on February 6, 2006 at 6:00 p.m., Romulus City Hall Council Chambers, 11111 Wayne Road, Romulus, Michigan, 48174, for the purpose of taking testimony on the demolition of structures and removal of all debris at the following addresses:

1. **29056 Ecorse - commercial Building and metal shed**
2. **34590 McBride - single family residence and garage.**
3. **7262 Middlebelt - single family residence.**
4. **6565 Wayne - single family residence and garage.**
5. **9464 Wayne - single family residence including wall in front yard.**
6. **37424 Huron River Drive - outbuilding.**

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

06-005

6A2. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Bragg to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute a revised version of the Water Service Agreement originally adopted as Resolution 05-340 to provide city water to 12872 Hannan Road, Van Buren Township.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

12. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Barden to adjourn the regular meeting of the Romulus City Council.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Barden, Bragg, Burcroff, Crout, Crova, Gear, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda R. Choate, CMC,
Clerk City of Romulus, Michigan

I, Linda R. Choate, Clerk for the City of Romulus, Michigan do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Romulus City Council held January 3, 2006.

Linda R. Choate, Clerk
City of Romulus, Michigan

Publish: January 12, 2006

SPORTS

Short-handed Whalers muzzle Soo 'Hounds, 4-2

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

The Plymouth Whalers worked extra hard for their two victories last week.

They went into the two contests with just 16 players but managed to outwork their opponents for well-earned wins.

Plymouth led from start to finish in a 4-2 victory over the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds on Saturday night at the Sault Memorial Gardens arena.

The Whalers (21-14-1-3 for 46 points and first place in the OHL West) were without James Neal, Derek Merlini and Mike Letizia who were suspended for two games because of their participation in a brawl during Plymouth's 5-1 loss last Thursday night in Barrie. Vaclav Meidl was in transit from the World Junior Championships. Joe Gaynor, Justin Garay, and Ryan Stephenson were out with injuries and Ondrej Otcenas was in transit from Slovakia.

Despite being outshot by the 'Hounds, 37-26, they won many other battles that night, including the one between the pipes where Justin Peters stopped 35 of 37 Sault Ste. Marie shots.

On offense, Gino Pisellini led the Plymouth attack with a pair of goals as the game's first star. He has 10 on the season. John Armstrong and Tom Sestito scored the others. Defenseman Wes Cunningham contributed two assists and was +3 on the night. Fellow defenseman Steve Ward also contributed with a +3 night.

Dustin Jeffrey and David Kuchedja scored for Sault Ste Marie, now 15-22-2-1.

Sestito got things going with the only score in the first period.

However, the key goal came at 1:30 mark of the second. Plymouth was down two men when Cunningham charged out of the penalty box after serving a minor penalty and controlled the puck behind the Soo net. He found Armstrong, who made no mistake with the short-handed shot to give Plymouth a 2-0 lead.

Jeffrey cut the Plymouth lead to 2-1 with a goal at 3:40 of the period but Pisellini scored his first of two on the night at 8:44 of the period on a power play. Dan Collins earned an assist with a pass from the left dot. Kuchejda scored on a power play at 16:50 of the second period to cut the Plymouth lead to 3-2.

Plymouth continued to pressure in the third.

Pisellini closed the scoring with the only goal of the third period at 4:28 when Andrew Fournier took a shot that bounced out to a waiting Sestito who found Pisellini all alone on the right wing side of the net.

The victory gained the Whalers two points on the nearest West division opponent, Saginaw (now 21-16-0-0 for 42 points).

Plymouth hosted the Spirit on Wednesday night but the results were unavailable at press time.

The Whalers head to Kitchener at 7:30 pm tomorrow and return home for a rematch with the Rangers at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday and at Ottawa at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Plymouth 5, Sudbury 1

Plymouth put a stop to a three game slide with a 5-1 victory over the Sudbury Wolves on Friday at the Sudbury Community Arena.

It was the first game the Whalers faced an opponent with just 16 players due to suspensions, injuries and players in transit from the World Junior Championships.

Despite being shorthanded, Plymouth outworked Sudbury all night long, leading 1-0 after one period and 3-0 after 40 minutes.

Five different Whalers scored—Evan Brophey, Jared Boll, Ward, John Vigilante and Fournier. Vigilante added two assists for a three-point night as the game's second star and Peters stopped 20 of 21 Sudbury shots as the game's first star. Ward earned the games' third star honors.

Evan Brophey scored the Whalers' first goal on a power play. Pisellini and Ward earned the assists on the play.

Boll scored to give the Whalers a 2-0 lead at 5:38 of the second period off his backhand while being checked to the ground. Ward gave Plymouth a 3-0 lead on a power play with nine seconds left in the second period when he rifled a shot by Sudbury goaltender Kevin Beech.

Vigilante scored a short-handed goal at the 11:24 mark of the third, giving the Whalers a 4-0 lead. Sestito and Peters were credited with assists on the play. Justin Allen scored Sudbury's lone goal at 17:02 and Fournier, from Collins, finished the scoring 12 seconds later for a 5-1 ending.

Soccer

FROM PAGE 9

you look at the Rockers and the Neon and how they did. It will be very difficult because Detroit is sport-oriented town with the Wings, the Pistons, Tigers and the Lions.

"On top of that you have a lot of kids that play soccer and coaches that still play, which will make it hard for people to make it to the games.

"I would love to see it work, though," he added, "I think Compuware would be the perfect facility for it," he added.

"I think it would help draw people in if there were a couple home-town guys on the team."

Bibb was hired in September of 2005 to prepare for a November 2006 launch in hopes of making this a successful franchise.

"I can't comment on how other teams have done in the past," Bibb said. "All I know is that I'm confident with our plan. It's a 14-month development phase for a purpose."

Bryan Finnerty, owner of High Velocity Sports in Canton Township and former player of both the Neon and the Rockers believes the success of the franchise has to do with the owners.

"I do think it will succeed here because of the ownership group," he said. "The Hantz Group and Greg Bibb are in it for long term."

"It's great for the kids," he added. "I'm excited for them to have the opportunity to see the game played at such a high level."

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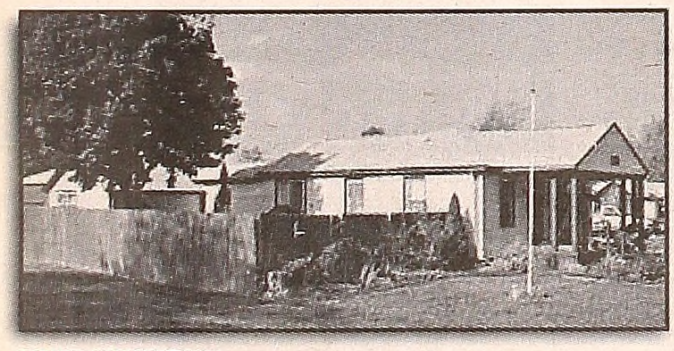
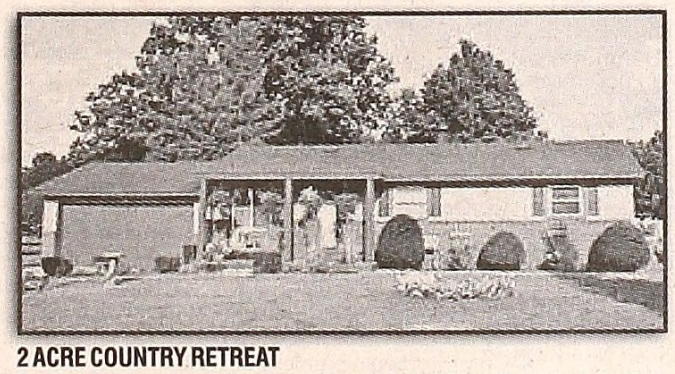


ZONED COMMERCIAL
This single family home sits on nearly one acre on high traffic/growth Belleville Road and is already zoned commercial. Perfect for medical, retail, office, or service use. At only $227,900, you can't afford to miss this opportunity. B-7934



2 ACRE COUNTRY RETREAT
Desirable ranch on two secluded acres features a 30x20 family room with fireplace, tchen with Pergo floor and Corian counters, 2 car attached garage and 3 car detached heated mechanic's garage! 1730 sqft, 3 bedrooms, 1 full bath and 2 half baths. $242,000. M-18279 "See the Virtual Tour on our Website!"

SO MUCH FOR SO LITTLE
This charming 4 bedroom, 3 bath Cape Cod home features an open floor plan and an elegant first floor master suite. Spacious upper bedrooms share a large, oak floored loft area overlooking the main entry. The huge basement is extra deep- plenty of headroom for all! Attached 2.5 car garage features an unfinished bonus room of 324 sqft. With it's large rooms, smart floor plan, and ¾ acre lot this could be the home you've been waiting for! $245,000. (A-40162)

BELLEVILLE LAKE
Enjoy awesome sunsets and beautiful panoramic lake views from this lovely 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom colonial. Wonderfully landscaped to a park-like setting and within walking distance to downtown Belleville. Features a large deck, gazebo on water's edge, and a finished basement with full bath. $374,000. P-25

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL
This charming 4 bed, 4 bath home is nestled in a wooded setting and features a hot tub with huge deck and patio. There are hardwood floors in kitchen, dining and living rooms. Finished basement with custom bar, oversized garage, and fireplace in living room. $274,900. S-38610 "See the Virtual Tour on our Website!"

LOOKING FOR A RANCH?
You'll love this brick ranch near the City of Belleville. Featuring a fireplace, large cedar deck, newer windows and kitchen cabinets, and all appliances stay. There are 2 spacious, heated garages- attached is one car wide but 2 cars deep! The detached 24x30 garage with 220 electric sits in the huge fenced yard. $184,900. M-104

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45. Adult Care
46. Private Schools/Instruction
47. Riding/Horses/Stables
50. Pets & Supplies
54. Rummage Sales
55. Estate Sales
56. Flea Markets
57. Antiques
58. Garage and Yard Sales
59. Auctions
60. Misc. Sales
61. Misc. Items
62. Building Supplies
63. Business and OfficeEquipment
64. Lawn & Garden Supplies
65. Tree Service
66. Landscape / Nurseries
67. Garden Plant / Supplies
68. Garden / Produce
70. Masonry / Brickwork
72. Machinery Tools
73. Musical Merchandise
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77. Recreation Vehicles
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88. Duplexes for Rent
89. Apartments for Rent
90. Condos/Townhouses for Rent
92. Business Places for Rent
93. Banquet Halls
94. Farm Land for Rent
95. Real Estate
96. Houses for Rent
97. Cottages for Rent
98. Mobile Homes for Rent
99. Flats for Rent
100. Will Share
101. Wanted to Rent
102. Storage
103. Business Property for Sale
104. Farms & Acreage for Sale
105. Mobile Homes for Sale
106. Houses for Sale
107. Condos/Townhouses for Sale
108. Lake and Resort
109. Income Property
110. Lots for Sale
111. Out of State Property
112. Commercial Lease
113. Real Estate Wanted
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59. Auctions

Notice is hereby given that on 1/25/06 at 1:00PM the following will be sold by competitive bidding at:

Stor-N-Lock
7840 N. Wayne Rd.
Westland, MI

Unit #E-21
Rodney H. Geter
1 TV
3 Office Equipment
9 Household Furnishing
30 Misc. Boxes/bags
10 Other Misc. Items

Notice of Public Sale
On Thursday, Jan. 26, 2006 at 11:00AM,
U-Stor-It
28266 Ecorse Rd,
Romulus, MI 48174 with reserve, will sell by the unit to the highest bidder by CASH all rights, title and interest to the following property:

Karla MacDonald-A9:
Furniture, boxes, misc.

Barbara Scott-C15:
China cabinet, totes, misc.

Eric Jartz-E10:
Tool boxes, speakers, misc.

Timothy Lea-E59:
Furniture, boxes, misc.

AUTO AUCTION
J & T Crova Towing
36573 Grant St.
Romulus, MI 48174
(734) 941-0221

JANUARY 25, 2006
9:00 AM

1987 Olds 88
1G3HY5439H1830432

1977 Olds Cutlass
3M57R7M342584

1990 Lincoln Continental
1LNLM9845LY633513

1992 Ford Ranger
1FTCR14U4NPA68161

1985 Honda Moped
JJ42AF0600FS145473

1992 Chevy Van
2GCGG39JKN4143605

1986 Cadillac 4 Dr
1G6CD6980G4320793

1995 Ford 4 Dr
1FALP52U35G228824

GMC 3500 Dump
TCX333S506463

1993 Chevy Astro
1GNDM19Z7PB216625

1992 Chevy Caprice
1G1BL55E9NR141049

1992 Ford T-Bird
1FALP62W25H198152

1989 Honda Accord
1HGCA5636KA059058

1986 GMC Pickup
3GTCW80HXGS801280

These vehicles were towed by Romulus Police.

CITY OF WESTLAND
NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

On JANUARY 17, 2006 the Westland Police Department will conduct public auctions of impounded abandoned vehicles. The first auction will begin promptly at 10:00am at Westland Service Towing, 300 S. Newburgh, Westland, MI, County of Wayne, where the following vehicles will be offered for sale to the highest bidder:

1987 Pontiac Firebird
2 Dr Black
1G2FS21S8HL204589

1989 Ford
PU Trk Burgundy
1FTDF15Y3KLA89049

The second auction will begin promptly at 11:00am at Westland Car Care, 6375 Hix Rd., Westland, MI, County of Wayne, where the following vehicles will be offered for sale to the highest bidder:

1998 Mazda MPV
SUV Green
JM3LV523XW0843125

1996 GMC Sonoma
PU Trk Black
1GTCS1947T8534153

1991 GMC Safari
StWgn White/Blue
1GDDM19Z6MB532629

1986 Mercury Marquis
4 Dr Green
2MEBP95F3GX706539

1998 Chrysler Sebring
2 Dr Silver
4C3AU52N4WE088693

1991 Pontiac Firebird
2 Dr White
1G2FS23T8ML231243

1985 Chevy Camaro
2 Dr Burgundy
1G1FP87H9FN167848

1994 Mercury
4 Dr White
1MEPM36XXRK659146

The third auction will begin promptly at 12:00pm at Goch & Sons, 795 Oakwood, Detroit, MI, County of Wayne, where the following vehicle will be offered for sale to the highest bidder:

1994 Buick Regal GS
2 Dr Blue
2G4WF15L3R1424044

All vehicles are sold in "as is" condition. Bidding on all vehicles will start at the amount due for towing and storage. Vehicles may be deleted from this list at any time prior to the start of the auction.

---

30 DAY NOTICE OF AUCTION
Due to unknown ownership, 30 day notice is hereby given that the vehicles listed below will be auctioned after FEBRUARY 11, 2006 unless they are claimed by the owners prior to that time:

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Motorhome Gray
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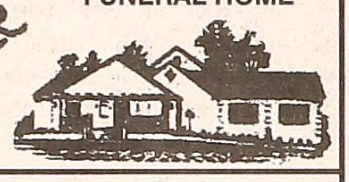

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Take a look
Bird watchers flock to nature park for census

Jason Tobin (left) and Kevin Arnold (right), interpreters at Oakwoods Nature Center, start putting together their bird species list right after New Year's and will continue to add to it throughout the year.

Andrea King
Staff Writer

Some people start off the New Year with new goals and plans for the next 364 days that follow. But for others, 'ringing in' the New Year means grabbing a set of binoculars and walking the trails at Oakwoods Metropark to discover some feathered friends.

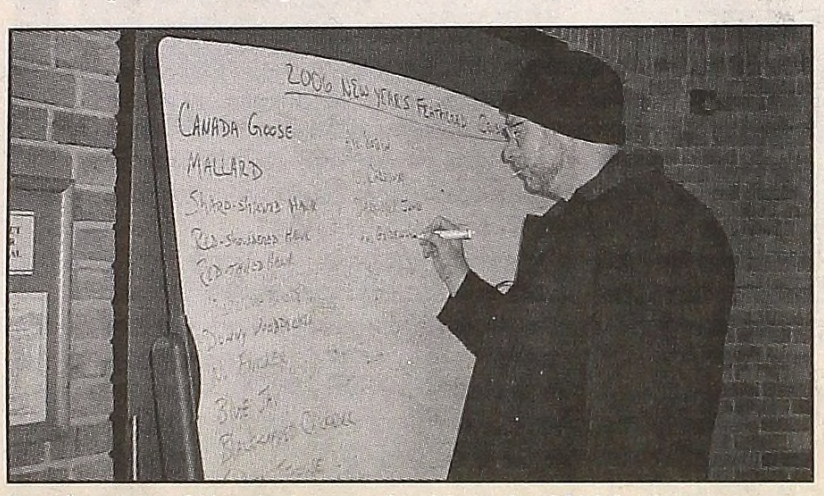
For the past several years, Oakwoods Metropark Nature Center in Belleville has organized an annual bird watching census Jan. 2. It allows participants to help interpreters discover the different species at the park and identify birds for the 2006 list.

"It's the way we like to kick-off the year's bird list with what species we have here and when," said Kevin Arnold, interpreter at Oakwoods. "We get a good jump-start for the year with this event."

Dedicated bird watchers Rhonda Lesperance of Riverview and Dan Sanders of Livonia started birding at 7:45 a.m. on Monday morning. They said it's a fun activity they can enjoy together.

"The best part is getting out into nature," said Lesperance.

"It's about looking and listening," added Sanders. "If you see something you've never seen before, then you go to the guidebook for the answer."



Dan Sanders of Livonia (pictured) adds to the 2006 feathered census list. He and his friend Rhonda Lesperance of Riverview found more than 18 different species of birds during the annual event at the park.

The couple has been bird watching for about three years now, Lesperance said. The hobby originally started from basic trail walks, which they now enjoy every weekend at various Michigan parks, including Oakwoods, Kensington and other along the Rouge River Watershed.

"The more I walked around and looked, the more I wanted to find out and know," said Lesperance.

"It evolved from asking 'what is that? And oh, what is that one?' also, reading books and getting to see what the birds are," Sanders said.

This year, some of the birds that will be added to the list include: downy woodpeckers, black-capped chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, brown creepers, northern cardinals, American goldfinches, mourning doves, dark-eyed junco sparrows, a sharp-shinned hawk, and the red-shouldered hawk, which was considered a rare occasion, Lesperance said.

"The red-shouldered hawk is a big find. You don't see that very often around this area," she said.

Throughout the year, an average of about 150 different species will be discovered from bird watchers of all ages, according to Arnold.

"Oakwoods holds a lot of different habitats of birds. Last year we even put a new species on the map," he said. "There are a lot of different levels of bird watching, too. Some people can hear a bird call 40 miles away and some are just beginners, but it's all about getting out there and doing it."

Some may think the sport of bird watching is an odd or even a fading hobby, but Arnold said the activity is actually gaining popularity.

"I think one of the great things about the hobby is that it's a relatively inexpensive sport," he said. "All you need is binoculars and a field guide. It's great recreation with all the walking and exercise and you get to enjoy the outdoors at the same time."

Oakwoods Metropark also hosts other birding programs throughout the year, like the "Woodcock Watch", which takes bird watchers out to view the mating dance of the species and the "Birding for Beginners", which covers the equipment, guides, common birds to be seen and a trail hike. For more information on bird watching or birding events, contact the park at 734-782-3956.

"Some people think it's strange, but it's just like any other sport," said Sanders. "Some people like jumping out of planes. I don't. I like doing this."

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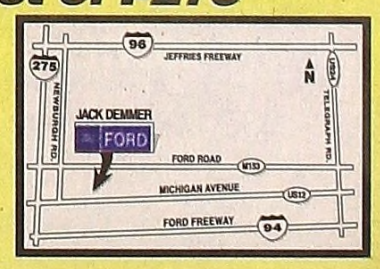

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